

W. Phillips

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

CAPTAIN OLIVER BROWN,

AN OFFICER OF THE

REVOLUTIONARY ARMY

WHO COMMANDED THE PARTY WHICH DESTROYED THE

STATUE OF GEORGE THE THIRD,

IN NEW YORK CITY, JULY 9, 1776.

BY THE

REV. HORACE EDWIN HAYDEN,

Member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,
&c., &c., &c.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

WILKES-BARRE, PA.

1882.

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Copyrighted, 1882,
By REV. HORACE EDWIN HAYDEN.

E. B. YORDY,
Book and Job Printer,
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

TO MY YOUNG FRIEND,

JULIA CAROLINE POLSLEY,

POINT PLEASANT, WEST VIRGINIA,

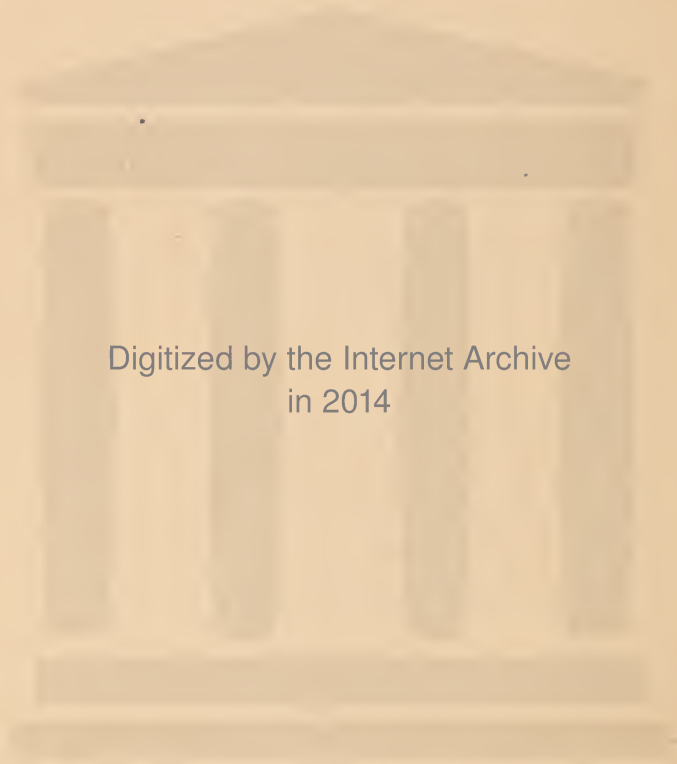
DAUGHTER OF THE LATE HON. DANIEL POLSLEY,

AND

GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF CAPT. OLIVER BROWN,

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OLIVER BROWN,

CAPTAIN OF ARTILLERY IN THE CONTINENTAL ARMY,
1775-1783.

A very interesting paper from the pen of the Rev. A. B. Muzzey, of Cambridge, Mass., entitled "The Battle of Lexington, with personal reminiscences of men engaged in it," and printed in the New England Historical-Genealogical Register for 1877 (xxxi., 377), calls to mind an active participant in the exciting events of that memorable 19th of April, 1775, who served his country with fidelity and distinction in the Revolutionary Army, but whose name escaped Mr. Muzzey's notice entirely. Mr. M. mentions Deacon "Solomon Brown," the patriot who drew the first British blood that day. Oliver Brown, who received his first baptism of fire on Lexington Green, was the elder brother of Solomon. They were both born in Lexington, and were sons of Benjamin (3), who married December 22d, 1742, Sarah Reed, daughter of William Reed, Esq. He was a deacon of the church at Lexington, and a justice of the peace. He had eleven children, among whom were Oliver (4), born July 25th, 1753; Solomon (4), born January 15th, 1757; and James (4), born October 13th, 1758. James (4) married, May 30th, 1780, Betty, daughter of Hammond and Betty (Simonds) Reed, of Lexington, where his descendants still reside. Of Solomon, see notice at the end of this sketch.

It has been claimed that Oliver was fourth in descent from Peter Brown, who came to America in the Mayflower, in 1620, through Peter, of Windsor, Conn., 1632. But the connection between the Windsor Browns and the Mayflower emigrant is not proven. Chas. Hudson, in his "History of Lexington, Mass.," makes Oliver fourth in descent from John, of Watertown, thus: Oliver 4, Benjamin 3, Joseph 2, John 1. This John, the ancestor of Oliver, was son of John, of Hawkedon, County Suffolk, England, mentioned by Savage as "baptized in Hawkedon Church, October 11, 1601; arrived September 16, 1632, at Boston, from London, on the ship Lion, and settled at Watertown."

According to Savage, John Brown, of Cambridge, called a Scotchman, married April 24th, 1653, Esther, daughter of Thomas Makepeace, and in his father's will, eleven years after, is called of Marlborough. He had eleven children, of whom the youngest, Joseph, was born at Marlborough, 1677. The next year John (1) moved to Falmouth, and probably at the second destruction of that town moved to Watertown, where he dates his will, November 20th, 1697, in which he mentions his son Joseph (2). Joseph (2) married November 15th, 1699, Ruhamah Wellington, and had Ruhamah, Daniel, John, and Joseph, born at Watertown. In 1709 he removed to Lexington, and there had James, Josiah, Benjamin, and William. He died there, a deacon of the church, January 11th, 1766. His wife died July 1st, 1772, age 92. This genealogical problem must be left for others to solve.

About the year 1762 Oliver Brown, while yet a youth of eight or nine years, became an inmate of the family of a Mr. Thatcher, of Cambridge, with whom he resided until he came of age. Living thus in such proximity to the scene of the very remarkable events which occurred in Massa-

Massachusetts during Gage's administration, he could not well be ignorant of them. Although but fourteen years of age at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, the rejoicing with which this action of Parliament was received in the colony, made an impression on his mind which subsequent events greatly strengthened. The landing of the British troops at Boston in 1768; the massacre of the citizens on the 5th of March, 1770; the dissolution of the General Assembly by proclamation of Gage; the seizure of the sloop *Liberty*, &c., were gradually preparing his mind for the great struggle, of which these occurrences were the forerunners. On the memorable day when the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor occurred, he was in Boston, drawn there by an impulse irresistible. "The very air was electric. In the tension of the popular mind, every sound and sight was significant." He noticed the unusual commotion among the inhabitants, and endeavored to learn the cause definitely, but failing of success, he returned early to Cambridge. His interest, however, was intensely aroused. He could not remain at home when his personal services were possibly needed in the city. He immediately returned to Boston, and following the leading of his impulse, found himself very soon amid the crowd that thronged the wharf, and so became an eye witness to the party of citizens who, dressed in the costume of Mohawk Indians, boarded the vessels lying at anchor there, and threw overboard into the harbor the cargo of tea which an indignant populace had not allowed to be landed. This incident removed whatever hesitancy Mr. Brown may have felt about espousing the cause of the Colonies, and decided him to devote himself to the defence of his country.

When the 19th of April dawned upon the people of Massachusetts, the citizens of Lexington had already heard

of the approaching party of six hundred British troops under Pitcairn, enroute for Concord to destroy the American stores secreted at the latter place. Before the break of day, Captain John Parker had assembled his little company of sixty men to drill them for the conflict which each man felt was assuredly near. The echoes of the last gun fired at Lexington that morning had scarcely died away before Oliver Brown was on his road, with his fire-lock over his shoulder, to Lexington. No telegraphic wires had flashed the messages of danger over that region, but before Pitcairn had taken one step in his march towards Concord, Paul Revere's signal had appeared in the spire of the old South Church, and mounted minute men, sparing neither whip nor spur, were arousing every farm house and village and hamlet with the cry, "To arms." Col. Smith began his retreat from Concord at noon that day. At every mile of the way back, over the same route which the victorious troops had stained with blood that morning, the crack of the patriot's musket was heard, each hour bringing in from the country around fresh accessions to the patriot force, and thinning the ranks of the weary and now dispirited foe, many of whom fell in their tracks exhausted, or wounded or dead. Among the patriots that afternoon Oliver Brown was active. When Lord Percy, who, with his twelve hundred men, had marched from Boston that morning to reinforce the party under Pitcairn, met the retreating column at Lexington, and opened upon the Americans with his two pieces of cannon, Oliver Brown stood within a few yards in immediate front of the artillery. When Lord Percy began his retrograde march towards Boston, Mr. Brown was among the patriots who hung upon his front and rear, harassing his column, until, as the sun sank to rest that evening, the wearied invaders reached the shelter of the royal vessels

riding at anchor in Boston harbor, and the pursuit of the patriots ceased.

After the events of this day, it was impossible that Mr. Brown should be an idle spectator of whatever might follow. He was among the first to enroll himself in the American Army that besieged the City of Boston. He was also one of the nine hundred men who, under the brave Prescott, on the evening of the 16th of June, marched to Breed's Hill, and that night erected the entrenchments, which, on the following day, they so gallantly defended against more than three times their number, that the wounded and killed of the enemy exceeded the entire force of Americans engaged in that battle. In this action, as well as during the long siege of Boston, he doubtless made a reputation for himself as a soldier, for on the 16th of January, 1776, then a private in the ranks, he received from the Congress a commission as "Captain-Lieutenant" of artillery, and was placed in command of two field pieces. After the evacuation of Boston, he moved with the American Army to New York City. There he became the principal actor in a transaction whose perpetrators have never been known unto this day.

On Thursday, September 16th, 1770, being the anniversary of the birthday of Prince Frederick, second child of George III., the Assembly of New York had caused to be erected, in the centre of Bowling Green, on a white marble pedestal 15 feet high, an equestrian statue of George III. This statue was made of lead, richly gilded, and was the workmanship of the celebrated statuary, Mr. Wilton, of London. The erection of this statue in the Bowling Green was the occasion of a grand public display, the members of the Colonial and City Government, the corporations of the Chambers of Commerce, and the Marine Society, and the officers of the Royal Army and Navy waiting upon the

Lieutenant Governor at the fort near by, where toasts were drunk to the accompaniment of military music and artillery. To protect this statue, the corporation of the City of New York enclosed it, in 1771, with an iron railing, at a cost of £800. Mr. John Austin Stevens, in his historical address on New York City, says: "The statue stood upon the Green in all its gilded glory, the object of loyal admiration and patriot contumely, until the evening of the 9th of July, 1776, when, after the hearing of the proclamation of independence, it was overthrown by the soldiery,—an act of vandalism, for which they received the rebuke of General Washington in General Orders the next morning." Captain Brown's narration of the event is as follows: The reading of the Declaration of Independence, occurring that day, aroused the American soldiers to the height of enthusiasm. Excited by the events which had already occurred, and in which he had so largely participated, and by the known proximity of the British forces, which landed at Long Island on the 22d, he had already determined to remove the statue of the King. The Declaration of Independence added firmness to his resolution. Selecting forty men on whose courage he could rely, one-half of them sailors, and providing them with ropes, Brown marched them secretly that night to a dark alley opposite the statue. Several sailors mounting the figure of His Majesty, securely fastened the ropes to his body, when the united strength of the entire party was exerted for his overthrow. But so firmly had the statue been fastened to the marble base, that the ropes broke at the first effort. Success, however, crowned the second attempt; the statue was pulled down over the fence, and the image of George III. lay humbled in the dust.

The deed was not known until the next day, when the news spread rapidly through the American Army. Coming

to the ears of General Washington, he at once condemned the destruction of this valuable work of art in the following severe language:

“HEADQUARTERS,
“NEW YORK, *July 10, 1776.*

“Though the General doubts not the persons who pulled down and mutilated the statue in the Broadway last night were actuated by zeal in the public cause, yet it has so much the appearance of riot and want of order in the army, that he disapproves the manner, and directs that in future these things shall be avoided by the soldiery, and left to be executed by proper authority.”

Whether Washington ever learned who was the leader in this transaction is not known, but his disapprobation, thus expressed, was so keenly felt by Captain Brown that he was accustomed to speak of the part he played in the destruction of the statue, as the one action of his whole life of which he was the most ashamed.

In obedience to the orders of a superior officer, Captain Brown separated the leaden statue from its iron support, and sent it to the laboratory to be moulded into bullets. Although it was impossible to conceal the deed itself, the men engaged in this unfortunate affair prevented the part they had individually taken from becoming publicly known, and the stirring events which almost immediately followed banished the matter from the popular mind.

Mr. Stevens, in his address, states that “the mutilated statue is said to have been taken to Litchfield, Connecticut, and run into bullets for the use of the American Army. Fragments of it, however, still exist, one in the possession of the New York Historical Society, as also the bullet mould to which the romantic story is attached. When

pulled down the marble pedestal remained, but the slab disappeared. Subsequent developments prove that it was taken to Paulus Hook, and used as a memorial stone of a British officer, in 1783—Major Smith, of the Highlanders. This stone is now in the possession of the New York Historical Society. The bed marks of the hoofs of the horse may be seen on one side of it, and the Highlander's epitaph on the other. Two or three years since there was dug up in a marsh near Stamford, Conn., about two hundred pounds of lead, evidently from the gilding, etc., belonging to the old statue,—the tail of the horse complete, parts of the saddle and housings,—these pieces were purchased for the New York Historical Society, in whose care they now remain."

Captain Brown does not appear to have taken any part in the severe battle of Long Island, but at the battle of Harlem Heights, he commanded thirty men and two field pieces. In the letter of General George Clinton, dated September 21st, 1776 (to be found in the appendix, p. 54, of the "Commemoration of the Battle of Harlem Heights, by the New York Historical Society, 1876"), it is stated that in this action the Americans brought a couple of field pieces to bear upon the British light troops, "which fairly put them to flight with two discharges only." The impetuous attack of the Virginia troops under Major Leitch, who came upon the field at this moment, drove the enemy four hundred yards to the top of a hill, where they were reinforced by the Forty-second Highlanders. After an engagement at this spot of two hours duration, the enemy were punished still more severely, and driven almost up to their own encampment. The American troops being in danger of a flank movement by the enemy, which would have cut off their retreat, were at once recalled, leaving the enemy

at the point to which he had last been driven. Until evidence to the contrary appears, I must believe that the two field pieces which thus repulsed the light troops of the enemy, and which followed them up with the infantry, until recalled by the orders of Washington, were those commanded by Captain Brown, who narrated the following incident as having occurred during that battle in which his field pieces were engaged. Having advanced too far in the pursuit of the enemy, when the troops were recalled, he found himself in danger of losing his pieces. He seized hold of one of his ordnance wagons to help his men, fifteen of whom were either killed or wounded, when Gen. Putnam rode up and said to him, "So long as officers will, like you, perform the duties of private soldiers there will be no room for despairing of the American cause." The General then dismounting, rendered personally all the aid he could, and they saved the pieces from capture. No credit is given by Marshall, in his "Life of Washington," to the artillery for the important part it played in this spirited engagement.

Captain Brown was also an actor in the battle of White Plains, where Captain Lilley was in command of the Massachusetts artillery. In this engagement Graydon says (p. 187) "We had *one* field piece with which to answer the fire of the enemy." Bancroft says (vol. v., p. 444), "A heavy but ineffective cannonade by the British across the Bronx was feebly returned by the *three* field pieces of the Americans on the hill." General Samuel Smith in his Autobiography (His. Mag., vol. vii., 2d Feb., 1870, p. 84) says, "Captain Lilley, of the Massachusetts artillery, had planted his guns on a knoll, and the light horse made a charge on him. He kept his fire until they were within fifty yards of him, when he discharged his *four* pieces, and horses and men (14) fell,

while those who were left fled, and he took his guns safe into the lines."

The retrograde movement of General Howe across the Hudson, and through New Jersey, followed the engagement at White Plains, and made it necessary that Washington should retreat towards Philadelphia in order to protect that city from the enemy. This retreat was most disastrous for the American cause. Desertions were constantly occurring. Bancroft says, "The army was melting away, while Congress showed signs of nervousness, and felt their want of resources." Wilkinson says, "The Eastern militia deserted in crowds from White Plains, and the levies from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Jerseys, whose term of service expired December 1st and January 1st, at Brunswick, almost to a man left Washington, until the grand army, which a few days before had numbered 13,000 men, was reduced to 3,000." Captain Brown, who followed the fortunes of America, undaunted by any disasters, until the close of the war, said that although he saw hundreds desert the army in despair during this retreat, yet he and his men remained unshaken and uninfluenced in their devotion to the cause. He was among the 2,400 brave men who crossed the Delaware on that terrible Christmas night, with eighteen field pieces, among which were his own. What part his guns took in the successful surprise of Trenton on the next morning does not appear. The artillery under Captain Forrest, according to Wilkinson, behaved with distinguished bravery. Col. Carrington says, speaking of the artillery, "a few skilfully handled guns determined the action." Whether Captain Brown was under the command of Captain Forrest is not known. He himself stated that he was an *actor* in this victory, which gave new life and impetus to the declining fortunes of the Americans, and also in those which

followed at Assanpink and Princeton. Subsequently he was stationed with his artillery at Bound Brook, which place General Lincoln occupied with 500 men, and where Cornwallis nearly succeeded in surprising the entire command on the 13th of April, 1777. Lincoln only saved his men by a prompt retreat, with the loss of two pieces of artillery, two subordinate officers, and twenty men.

In the following September, Captain Brown was engaged with his guns in the long and severe battle, which lasted from sunrise to sunset, on the banks of the Brandywine, and which terminated in the defeat of the American Army, and the opening of the way to Philadelphia for General Howe. The next month he was sending his shot and canister among the enemy's troops at Germantown, into which battle he entered with a command of sixty men, thirty-one of whom he left dead or dying upon the field. In the following month (October), he was transferred to Fort Mifflin or Mud Island, making one of that gallant band who, under the brave Simeon Thayer, whose laurels another was allowed to wear, made such a spirited defence of the place against the assault of Donop and Howe.

Then followed the long, weary, and dispiriting winter rest and starvation of Valley Forge, where Captain Brown often suffered for the necessities of life, without abating one jot of his patriotic devotion to the holy cause he had espoused on that day of the baptism of blood at Lexington, in 1775. This winter inactivity was broken up by the spring campaign, in which he bore a gallant part. When Lee lost his temper at Monmouth, and ignominiously ordered a retreat, Captain Brown was not among those who turned their backs on the enemy, but he stood bravely by his guns, and used them effectively. As Hamilton stated in his account of that battle, "the artillery acquitted themselves most charmingly."

After this event, Brown was ordered to Fort Schuyler, where Gansevoort had, with such distinguished bravery, sustained a siege by St. Leger and his Indian allies. He must have been at Fort Schuyler at the time of Van Schaick's expedition against the Onondaga towns in 1779, but his memoranda says nothing more of his military career in the Revolutionary service, excepting that he continued a Captain-Lieutenant in the artillery of the Massachusetts line until the close of the war. Four years of his service were passed under the personal command of General Washington, by whom he "was entrusted with many small adventures, for the execution of which he received Washington's personal thanks."

In 1776 Captain Brown married Miss Abigail Richardson, of Massachusetts, who was born April 1st, 1756, and by whom he had eleven children, whose descendants have been prominent citizens of the Republic. She was the sixth child of Edward and Abigail (Cheney) Richardson, and of the sixth generation from Ezekiel Richardson, of Woburn, Mass., 1630, thus: Abigail 6, Edward 5, Theophilus 4, Ezekiel 3, Theophilus 2, Ezekiel 1. Ezekiel, the emigrant, was a man of note in his day; a Constable, appointed by the Court in 1633, and a Deputy to the General Court, 1635.

In 1790 Captain Brown moved his family to the western part of Virginia, near where now stands the town of Wellsburg.* Here he served his time as an officer of the militia

*Hudson's History of Lexington, Mass., says that Oliver Brown "moved to Virginia and settled on the Ohio River, and gave his name to the place, viz., Brownsville." This is evidently an error. If Wellsburg was ever named Brownsville, it is not so recorded in Doddridge, or Cramer, or Jacobs. In 1790, when Patrick Gass visited the spot where Wellsburg now stands, he says "there was but one building to be seen; that was a log house on the lower end of the bottom, near midway then between the river and the hills. It was built and for many years occupied by Alexander Wells, and was standing in 1858." Wellsburg was originally named *Charlestown*. In 1808 Cramer notes it as "Wellsburgh, formerly Charlestown." It stands on a high bank of the Ohio. Brownsville, Pa., 50 miles above Pittsburg, on the Monongahela, the south point of the Ohio, was named from Thomas Brown—no relative of Oliver. There is no other town of the name on the Ohio River from there down to the Kentucky line.

for three years against the Indians. Among the early settlers of that section with whom he was long associated were Colonel William McKennan, of the Revolution, father of Hon. T. M. T. McKennan, Secretary of the Interior under Fillmore; Judge Albert Caldwell, Rev. Joseph Doddridge, D. D., Philip Doddridge, Esq., and others. Captain Brown became in his later life a communicant of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and his name occurs in the subscription paper of Trinity Church, Wellsburg, in 1800, of which the Rev. Dr. Doddridge was Rector. In 1808 he was appointed one of the six Commissioners of the Wellsburg and Washington turnpike, which connected the town of Wellsburg with the National Road.

In 1840 he received a pension from United States Government for his services during the Revolution. He died February 17th, 1846, at the house of his son-in-law, Mr. Stephen Colwell, near Wellsburg, aged nearly ninety-five, and blind, but not infirm.

Oliver and Abigail (Richardson) Brown had issue:

- I. Abigail, b. Cambridge, Mass., — 1776.
- II. John, b. Cambridge, May 17, 1780.
- III. Sarah, b. January —, 1782.
- IV. Danforth, b. November —, 1783.
- V. Catharine, b. July —, 1785.
- VI. William, b. July —, 1787.
- VII. Oliver, b. — 1789.
- VIII. George, b. Wellsburg, — 1792.
- IX. James, b. Wellsburg, February —, 1794.
- X. Richard, b. Wellsburg, — 1796; grad. Jefferson College, Pa., A. B. 1822; was ordained to the ministry

of the Presbyterian Church; received degree of D. D. from Washington College, Pa., 1861; was President of Franklin College, New Hagerstown, O.; d. — 1879.

XI. Elizabeth, b. Wellsburg, — 1800.

Of these children,

II. JOHN BROWN married 1800, in Wellsburg, Mrs. Eleanor (Doddridge) Gantt, widow of Mr. John Gantt, of Frederick, Md., and daughter of Philip Doddridge, Sen., who emigrated from Maryland in 1770, and settled in Western Virginia, near the junction of Dunkard's Creek and the Monongahela River. She was also sister of Hon. Philip Doddridge, of Virginia, justly esteemed for many years, "one of the most noted men of his section for his splendid talents at the bar." He was a member of the United States Congress from 1829 until his death, November 19th, 1832. (See Am. Pioneer, vol. i., pp. 134-6). Mrs. Brown was born in Hopewell township, Washington county, Pa., October 26, 1780. She had one daughter by her first marriage, Juliana Doddridge Gantt, born in Frederick, Md., February 28, 1802.

John and Eleanor (Doddridge-Gantt) Brown had issue:

I. Catharine, b. June 17, 1807; d. Jan. 11, 1809.

II. Eliza Vilette, b. June 16, 1809; d. Dec. 5, 1879; married Hon. Daniel Polsley, of Point Pleasant, W. Va.; lawyer; Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit of West Virginia, 1862; Representative to the XLth United States Congress, 1867; d. — 1875.

III. Caroline R., b. Oct. 22, 1811; d. Sept. —, 1881.

IV. John, b. Feb. 12, 1814; d. July 19, 1814.

V. Louisa, b. Feb. 3, 1816.

- VI. Harriet, b. Nov. 20, 1818; d. Jan. 26, 1841.
- VII. John Doddridge, b. Oct. 8, 1821; d. April 10, 1860.
- VIII. Danforth, b. Holliday's Cove, Va., June 25, 1824.

Bishop Meade, in his "Old Churches and Families of Virginia," says (vol. ii., p. 333) the Protestant Episcopal Church in Wellsburg "have a neat brick church, which was built some years ago almost entirely at the expense of two brothers, John and Danforth Brown."

EPITAPH OF CAPTAIN BROWN,

engraved upon the monument that marks his grave, at Wellsburg: "Captain Oliver Brown, of the Artillery of the Massachusetts Line, Revolutionary War. Born in Lexington, Mass., 1752. He stood in front of the first cannon fired by the British on the Americans in the affray at Lexington. Witnessed the Tea Party, Boston Harbor. Was at the Battle of Bunker's Hill. Commissioned by Congress 16th of January, 1776. Commanded the volunteer party that bore off the leaden statue of King George from the Battery of New York, and made it into bullets for the American Army. Bore a conspicuous part in command of Artillery at the Battles of White Plains, Harlem Heights, Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth. After serving his country, he enlisted in the Armies of the Son of God, and surrendered to the last enemy on the 17th of February, 1846, in the full assurance of a never ending

PEACE."

SOLOMON BROWN,

The younger brother of Captain Oliver Brown, was born at Lexington, Mass., January 15th, 1756, or 1757. He was therefore but eighteen years old when the fight at Lexington occurred. On the day preceding that event (April 18, 1775) he is said to have been the first one who brought to Lexington the information that Pitcairn was about to march to Concord. Having volunteered to watch the approach of the British, he was taken prisoner by them, and detained several hours. But he escaped, and as the following obituary notice mentions, he took an active part in the stirring scenes of the 19th of April.

He subsequently removed to Vermont, became an officer in the Revolution, and is mentioned in the "Government and Council of Vermont" as "Captain Solomon Brown." He was also long a Deacon of the Congregational Church of Middleburg, where he permanently located.

"DEACON SOLOMON BROWN.

"The individual whose name heads this article, and a notice of whose death appeared in this paper a short time since, was one of the oldest inhabitants of New Haven, in this county, and died claiming the respect of all who knew him, for his virtues both as a man and a citizen. He was a man of strong natural powers, of great probity, of uncommon firmness of mind and purpose, of severe justice, and of Christian candor and meekness. He held for many years stations of public trust among his fellow-citizens, which he ever discharged with fidelity and promptness. He was an

active and devoted Christian, and a father in the church. He was, in short, one of that class of the community who are the support of the society, the pillars of the church, and the ornaments of the republic.

"Deacon Brown was a soldier of the Revolution, and bore a part in that memorable struggle which should immortalize him in the annals of his country. He was a participator in the first battle for freedom on the plains of Lexington, *and has the unrivaled honor of having shed the first British blood in defence of American liberty, at the battle of Lexington, on the morning of the 19th of April, 1775.*

"This battle was the opening scene of the bloody drama which closed with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and in this scene the subject of this notice stands forth the most prominent actor. He wrote in blood the first word in the charter of *American freedom*. Let his name be registered among the noblest of his country's benefactors and heroes, and honored by posterity as the most dauntless of their heroic sires. Deacon Brown served five years in the Revolution as a Sergeant of Artillery, and encountered all the perils and hardships of that memorable and glorious struggle. He died mourned by his friends, lamented by the church, and respected by all. To those that came after him, he has left a legacy of an honest name, a guiltless example, and a well spent life. He came down to the grave 'like a shock of corn fully ripe;' his body rests with the great congregation of the dead, and his beatified spirit has gone, we trust, to the 'bosom of his Father and his God.' Peace be to the memory of the just and good." (From the Middleburg, Vermont, Free Press, about 1830.)

A writer in the Historical Magazine (vol. iii., p. 113, 1859) makes a similar claim for *Ebenezer Lock*, as having shed the

first British blood on the 19th of April, 1775. The claim of Solomon Brown rests on the evidence of an eye witness. The Rev. Mr. Muzzey, in his *Reminiscences* (N. E. His. Gen. Reg., vol. xxxi., p. 377), mentions "Elijah Sanderson," who testified that "he saw blood where the British column stood when *Solomon Brown* fired at them."

It is conceded that no British soldier was wounded on the 19th of April, 1775, before Pitcairn fired on the militia, who were assembled on the green at Lexington, in front of the meeting house. It is also conceded that at least *one* British soldier, if not *two*, were wounded, and that *none* were killed before the march from Lexington to Concord. It is in evidence that Brown was there, that he did fire on the enemy, and did wound one. The writer who advances Mr. Lock's claim states too much for his claimant. He says "Lock worked valiantly for some minutes, *bringing down one of the enemy at nearly every shot. Up to this time not a shot had been fired elsewhere by the rebels*"—statements utterly at variance with every other account of that day's proceedings.



